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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION

TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2009

Ambassador Jeffrey Invited to MFA on Obama Remarks; Bahceli-Jeffrey Meeting

Media outlets report Ambassador James Jeffrey was invited Monday to the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) to be told about Ankara's Anxiety with President Obama's April 24 speech to commemorate the events of 1915. The MFA told Ambassador Jeffrey some of the expressions used in the statement were "unacceptable," and added Obama's speech did not mention the hundreds of thousands of Turks killed in 1915.

Papers continue reporting about Ambassador Jeffrey's call last Friday on the opposition MHP leader Devlet Bahceli. According to papers, Bahceli warned Ambassador Jeffrey by saying, "The Turkish nation don't want to live an 'April 24 syndrome' every year. This syndrome heightens the anti-American sentiments. Every year, 1.2 million children are born in Turkey, to be raised with anti-American feelings. I hope the U.S. won't make a mistake of sacrificing a Turkey of 70 million for a couple hundred thousand of its Armenian citizens." Ambassador Jeffrey thanked Bahceli for his "open and clear" remarks, and praised the "bold decisions" of Turkey's 57th government, in which the MHP was a coalition partner, which helped Turkey's economy to recover and today are helping the economy to be less affected by the global crisis, say papers.

Armenian Nationalist Party Quits Government in Yerevan  
Media outlets report the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, or Dashnaktsutyun, left the coalition government in Yerevan over the 'agreement' Turkey and Armenia have reached on the normalization of ties. The Armenian nationalist party condemned the agreement as "unacceptable." Papers note Dashnak party's departure from the coalition with its 16 seats will not affect the government's ability to rule.

Editorial Commentary on Turkey-Armenia Normalization

Hasan Cemal wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "An act of statesmanship requires steps to create empathy towards the agonies of the past and take the appropriate steps. Only by doing so can we be assured that the country's future won't be taken hostage by past agonies."

Sahin Alpay wrote in Islamist-oriented Zaman: "Both Ankara and Yerevan deserve appreciation for concluding a road map for normalizing ties. We better focus on this process instead of what the U.S. President said or should have said."

Cengiz Candar wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "It is hard to understand the harsh reaction against Obama's use of Meds Yeghern. There is no rational explanation to object to 'great disaster' as opposed to genocide."

Fehmi Kuru wrote in Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak: "President Obama's message can be interpreted in two different ways. Based on the way one looks at it, this could be a chance to normalize ties with Armenia or it could be a further American threat to corner Turkey. It remains to be seen which direction the Prime Minister will have to take."

Ilhan Selcuk wrote in leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet: "Turkish rulers are so clearly acting under American directives that they are irrational. Nowadays, the talk is normalizing with Armenia by opening the border. Armenia does not even officially recognize Turkish borders. Where is the logic in opening a border to someone who does not even recognize it?"

**Terrorist Killed in Shootout with Police in Istanbul**  
Media outlets report that early Monday, police raided 60 places in Istanbul suspected as hideouts for terrorists who were planning to stage bloody attacks on May 1, and detained more than 40 people. In one of the raids, Orhan Yilmazkaya, a member of the terrorist group Revolutionary Headquarters, was killed in the Bostanci residential

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area on the Asian side of Istanbul at the end of a bloody skirmish involving some 600 policemen. A police officer and a 16-year old boy were killed, and seven policemen and a cameraman were wounded in the clashes. Yilmazkaya threw 12 hand grenades at security forces in the six-hour shootout. Liberal Radikal says it was "scandalous" that televisions were allowed to broadcast the shootout live, giving information to the terrorist inside about the location of policemen around the house, and that police also let curious passers-by watch the scene.

**Scores Detained in Operations against Fundamentalist Groups**  
Media outlets report over 150 people have been detained in anti-terror operations held simultaneously against fundamentalist terror organizations in the eastern and southeastern provinces of Adana, Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş, Sanlıurfa, Osmaniye, Elazığ, Erzurum, Malatya, and Bitlis. Thirteen members of the Gaziantep-based Vasat organization were arrested in Sanlıurfa. Several members of Turkey's other radical Islamist organizations such as Hizbullah, İhya-Der and the Federal Islamic State of Anatolia were also detained in the operations. The Islamist organization Vasat first appeared after a bomb attack on a Bible stand in Gaziantep in September 1998 that killed a four-year-old child.

**Israel Expresses 'Unease' with Turkey-Syria Military Exercise**  
Papers report Israel expressed "uneasiness" Monday over a joint Turkish-Syria border troop exercise, with Defense Minister Ehud Barak describing it as a "disturbing development." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports the Debkafile website claims the joint exercise, "which has the approval of Washington," was considered a new sign of the "tripartite military alliance between Turkey, Syria and Lebanon."

**Growing Concern Over Swine Flu**  
Media outlets are alarmed by the fast-spreading swine flu which has killed more than a hundred in Mexico and infected many in the US, and call for immediate steps to stop the virus from entering Turkey. Mainstream Sabah reports a 'Nightmare at the Door,' with new cases in Europe, and says the entire world is on alert. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet headlines, 'Panic in Europe' and notes, 'as the swine flu spreads, Turkey is alarmed.' Mainstream Hurriyet speculates that it might be a biological weapon referring to 'the archeologist who shook hands with President Obama during his Mexico trip and later died of swine flu symptoms.' Mainstream

Haberturk reports, 'World Health Organization called on EU health ministers to convene an emergency meeting.' The paper notes, 'Turkish Health Ministry has also taken steps against the virus,' although no specific measures are reported.

Pakistan Pushes the Button for Taliban (Haberturk)  
Mainstream Haberturk reports, 'Pakistan, the only Muslim country with nuclear power, after raising concerns in the US and Europe because of their peace talks with the Taliban, has now launched a military offensive on Taliban forces. Mainstream Milliyet writes, 'Huge Operation against the Taliban in Pakistan,' and notes 'President Zardari said Pakistan's nuclear capabilities are in "safe hands," but called for additional foreign aid to assure its nuclear arms remain in safe hands. Liberal Radikal reports, 'because of pressure from the US, Pakistan launched military operations against Taliban,' adding, 'the Taliban has broken off peace talks in Islamabad.'

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- Airports in Istanbul and Ankara went on high alert as health officials around the world race to tackle the swine flu outbreak.
- The Education Ministry has changed the regulations for secondary and high school students, eliminating the practice of expelling

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students who become engaged to be married.

- Turkey's National Security Council (MGK) will hold on Tuesday a meeting chaired by President Abdullah Gul. Prime Minister Erdogan and the military General Staff Chief General Ilker Basbug will participate in the meeting.
- State Minister Mehmet Simsek says Turkey submitted an economic plan to the IMF, but added that he cannot give a clear time regarding the approval of an IMF program.
- Moody's says it expects Turkey's economy to shrink four percent in 2009, but notes Turkey's rating could be upgraded if the government demonstrates stronger capacity to generate revenues.

World

- Germany insists that the visa ruling of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) was valid only for the Turkish truck drivers carrying goods from Turkey to the EU. EU jurists disagree, saying the court ruling does not leave much room for interpretations.
- On May 7 in Strasbourg, the European Parliament will debate the democratic process in Turkey.
- The US Fifth Fleet will transfer the command of the counter-piracy international naval force CTF 151 to the Turkish Navy on May 3.
- French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said in an interview with a Spanish newspaper that Turkey was a bridge between Christian Europe and the Islamic world.
- In Kyrgyzstan, a couple hundred strong mob damaged the houses and vehicles of Kurds in the Petrovka village over allegations that a four year old Russian child was raped. More than 30,000 Kurds live in Kyrgyzstan.

JEFFREY